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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 735
By DeBerry J

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend former United States Congressman Harold Ford Sr. on his outstanding service to Tennessee, Shelby County and the nation.

WHEREAS, the Tennessee General Assembly is proud to specially recognize distinguished public officials who have competently performed their duties with extraordinary diligence and dedication, thus bringing substantial benefits to their respective communities, and to this state and nation; and

WHEREAS, it was with deep regret that the members of this body, his countless friends, and his constituents learned that Congressman Harold Ford had decided to retire from public office, after an exemplary 22 years in the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, a native of Memphis, Congressman Ford was born on May 20, 1945, the son of Vera Davis and Newton Jackson Ford; he attended Memphis schools, and graduated from Geeter High School ; and

WHEREAS, he received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from Tennessee State University, his Associate of Arts Degree in Mortuary Science from the John H. Gupton College and his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Howard University; and

WHEREAS, after graduation, Congressman Ford expertly managed his family's business, N. J. Ford and Sons Funeral Parlors; and

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WHEREAS, seeing an opportunity to contribute significantly to his state's government and having a groundswell of public support, Harold Ford ran for the Tennessee General Assembly and was easily elected; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Ford served admirably as a state representative during the Eighty-Seventh and Eighty-Eighth General Assemblies, representing House District 86; and

WHEREAS, while a highly regarded member of the state legislature, he served as Majority Whip and chaired a special committee investigating rates charged by utilities across the state; it was from these humble beginnings that his lifelong goal to help the poor, the weak and the oppressed began, a goal which he has successfully carried forth throughout his outstanding political career; and

WHEREAS, at that time Harold Ford saw the need for a Congressman who cared about his constituents and would work hard in their best interests; and despite the inherent problems of trying to beat an established incumbent congressman, he took on the monumental challenge, won his first major race, and was elected to represent Memphis in the U.S. Congress; and

WHEREAS, he was the first and still the only African American Tennessean ever elected to serve in Congress; and

WHEREAS, beginning with the Ninety-Fourth Congress, Congressman Ford served 11 fruitful terms; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Ford served for 21 years as a member of the powerful and prestigious House Finance, Ways and Means Committee, which has jurisdiction over all tax and revenue-raising legislation, Social Security and Medicare programs; he concluded his illustrious Congressional career as the ranking member of the committee; and

WHEREAS, as a valued member of the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee, he played a significant role in the drafting of 15 major tax bills passed by the United States Congress, legislation that affected every United States government agency and citizen; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1981, Congressman Ford served commendably for ten active and productive years as Chairman of the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee Subcommittee on Human Resources, a subcommittee that has jurisdiction over \$40 billion in programs, including Aid to Families With Dependent Children, Title XX, Supplementary Security Income, Child Welfare and Foster Care, Low-Income Energy Assistance, and Unemployment Compensation Insurance. He was the youngest chairman ever selected to head a Finance, Ways and Means subcommittee; and

WHEREAS, as Chair of this subcommittee, he was the primary architect of the landmark Family Support Act of 1988, which had a major impact on the Aid to Families With Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, Medicaid, Medicare and other entitlement programs. He worked closely with then Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton, Chairman of the Governor's Conference on Welfare Reform, in the passage of this important legislation; and

WHEREAS, as an esteemed member of the House Finance, Ways and Means Committee's Health Subcommittee, Congressman Ford worked extensively with the Office of Management and Budget, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Health Care Finance Administration and numerous other agencies of the federal government in formulating national health policy; and

WHEREAS, he also served with distinction as a respected member of the crucial Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, as ranking member of the Finance, Ways and Means Subcommittee on Oversight, and as an exemplary member of the Congressional Black Caucus, the House Select Committee on Aging, the Congressional Arts Council, the Environment and Energy Conference, the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues and the Democratic Study Group; he made numerous significant contributions to each of these groups; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Ford also served in the important position of Democratic Zone Whip, representing the states of Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, he was ever a dynamic and aggressive participant in the congressional process and garnered much respect from his colleagues; and

WHEREAS, from the very beginning of his exemplary service in the Congress, Harold Ford's office received many deserved accolades for the timely and compassionate manner in which they provided constituent services; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Ford supervised the handling of thousands of requests of people in need, concerns that included Medicare, Medicaid, public housing, small businesses and other matters relating to the federal government; and

WHEREAS, among the numerous highlights of his meritorious service to the Memphis community as a member of Congress, it was the landmark legislation which enabled Federal Express to develop the private package delivery business that is common today, but was unique at the time; and

WHEREAS, as Congressman, he made major contributions to the Memphis Regional Airport, downtown redevelopment and local hospitals and health agencies; and

WHEREAS, throughout his storied career, he has been widely acknowledged as one of the most important political leaders in Tennessee and the Mid-South, a man who eloquently spreads the word and effectively sets out the vote for the highest quality candidates; and

WHEREAS, his valuable assistance has been aggressively sought after by numerous national, state and local political campaigns; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Ford coordinated both the 1992 and 1996 Clinton-Gore Presidential Campaigns in Memphis and Shelby County; in the 1996 election, the Clinton/Gore victory in Shelby County provided the winning margin for the President in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, a hard worker and tireless advocate for the needy, his retirement from Congress greatly disconcerted and disappointed his fellow lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans alike, and his considerable talents and energies are sorely missed; and

WHEREAS, since his retirement, he has astutely managed Harold Ford and Company, which provides business consultation and federal executive branch lobbying services to the health, transportation and telecommunication industries; and

WHEREAS, the power and prestige that Congressman Ford earned as a Congressman and public official have been used to benefit others, and he has always acknowledged that true power comes from the Lord above, as a faithful, devoted and active member of the Mt. Moriah East Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, in the finest traditions of the Volunteer State, Harold Ford has generously donated his time and leadership as a member of the National Advisory Council of Saint Jude's Children's Research Hospital, as a member of the Metropolitan Memphis Young Men's Christian Association Board of Directors, as a trustee for Fisk University and Rose College, and as a member of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity; and

WHEREAS, Congressman Ford has been strongly supported in all his efforts by his wife, the former Dorothy Bowles and his three children, Newton, Sir Isaac, and Congressman Harold Eugene Ford, Jr., who succeeded his father in Congress, thus marking the first time that a son has ever succeeded his father as a member of Congress, is already gaining national prominence; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that we should pause to specially recognize, honor and commend former Congressman Harold Ford, reflecting with deep admiration on his numerous contributions to the political, business and civic lives of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE-HUNDREDTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, That we honor Congressman Harold Ford, Sr. on his outstanding service to the state of Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we commend him upon his countless contributions and many good works in service of the citizens of Memphis, Shelby County, Tennessee and this great nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we extend to him our best wishes for much continued success in his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.